



Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida & Power counties

## ECONOMIC TRENDS

The October unemployment rate in the Pocatello Metropolitan Statistical Area was 2.3 percent, one-tenth of a point higher than September, but much lower than last October's 3.4 percent. The lower unemployment rate translates into 510 fewer people unemployed in the area than a year ago. There were also 1,010 more people working this October than last.

Non-farm jobs increased slightly from September, but total jobs for October matched the total in October 2006. The only significant month to month change in the goods producing sector was in a subsector of manufacturing, where a 45.8 percent increase, 100 jobs, resulted from small payroll increases by several existing business and hires by the area's newest employer, steel fabricator Petersen Inc.

In the service sector, the most significant changes came in government — a drop of 520 in administration and an increase of 640 in public schools. While some of the increase in education reflects stronger than expected enrollment growth, much of the overall change involved recording government administration jobs as education jobs.

### MIGRATION PATTERNS IN SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO

With the economy, especially at the national level, seemingly entering a period of change, recognizing and interpreting economic indicators becomes even more important. One is the change in the migration patterns of people to and from an area. As a lagging economic indicator, migration patterns in part reflect workers entering or leaving an area in relationship to work opportunities, which may also be reflected in a changing unemployment rate. For many years there have been more people leaving eastern Idaho than moving in. As recently as 2002, eastern Idaho experienced a negative migration of more than 1,000 people. Although there has been population growth in most eastern Idaho counties it has been primarily because the natural difference between births and deaths has been more than enough to offset the negative migration. As the economy has improved, net migration has gradually become positive. It seems to be a clear indicator work-

ers will return to the area if good-paying jobs are available. Although it is unclear how many of the people migrating to eastern Idaho are former residents, it is clear that the improved economy is attracting more people to the area. Southeastern Idaho Table 1 shows the change in the net migration of people for eastern Idaho from 2002 to 2006 and the corresponding change in the rate of unemployment.

Southeastern Idaho Table 1: Net Migration Patterns for Southeastern Idaho

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Net change	-1057	-402	-169	14	35
Unemployment rate	4.6	4.4	4	3.5	3.2

### UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS

Many regions of the United States and several counties in Idaho are experiencing a greater number of unemployment claims than at this same time last year. As Southwest Idaho Table 2 shows the number weekly unemployment claims filed in southeastern Idaho during October 2007 was 74 fewer than in 2006. The increase in total claims filed in Idaho is attributed to large layoffs at Micron Technology in Boise and the slowing of the housing market in the southwestern part of the state. In southeastern Idaho good weather has allowed commercial construction projects to continue. And when combined with job growth by existing manufacturing and retail businesses, a much larger percentage of

Southeastern Idaho Table 2: Number of Unemployment Claims, October 2006 Compared to October 2007

County	2007	2006	Change
Bannock	1663	1660	3
Bear Lake	62	55	7
Bingham	475	496	-21
Caribou	65	81	-16
Franklin	28	64	-36
Oneida	24	22	2
Power	98	111	-13
SE Idaho	2415	2489	-74
Idaho	32,871	23,133	9,788

the work force in the region is able to find satisfactory employment. The net result is fewer claims for unemployment insurance benefits.

## COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS

### *BANNOCK COUNTY*

- The Hampton Inn & Suites began welcoming guests this month in Pocatello. With the opening of the Hampton Inn, Pocatello now has 15 hotels.
- Hoku Scientific announced the signing of another customer for its polysilicon solar wafer chips. An eight-year contract with Solarfun Sign, a China-based manufacturer, requires Hoku to begin delivery of wafers in the second half of 2009. Hoku will receive initial payment of \$10 million in December.
- Tot Spot, a new child care center for newborns to 18-month-olds, opened in Chubbuck. The new business is owned by Katie Johnston and will maintain a ratio of one worker per four children.
- Economic growth and rising property values in Pocatello have pushed the city's tax levy down 3.6 percent. After declining the past couple of years, the levy is about the same as five years ago. The decrease means a savings of about \$40 in taxes on a \$100,000 home.
- Petersen Inc. officials announced they will be opening a new custom steel fabricating facility in building 36 at the Gateway West Business and Industrial Center. The company will use 12 cranes ranging from 5 to 50 tons and have access to two rail spurs. Initial employment will be about 40, but the company is expecting to have nearly 250 employees in the near future. More information about the company is on its Web site at [www.Peterseninc.com](http://www.Peterseninc.com).
- New Pocatello City Manager David Allen has been promoting opportunities for industrial development at the airport and encouraging greater use of the flight service offered. Most airlines require at least a 60 percent average capacity load, and flights from Pocatello have been filling to about 55 percent.
- Legislation requiring Amtrak to restore passenger service to Pocatello has passed the U.S. Senate. The bill is now being debated in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- Business partners Bill Isley, Don Zebe and Joe Fraser announced that they are planning to build a prototype Ruby Tuesday restaurant next to the recently opened Marriott TownPlace Suites. Construc-

tion will begin in December and opening is expected before next Memorial Day weekend.

- The Shoe Carnival opened in the store next to T.J. Maxx and Wal-Mart, which was vacated by the Dollar Store. The Shoe Carnival is a national retail shoe franchise offering a variety of family footwear.
- Representatives of Idaho State University and Portneuf Medical Center believe a formal working relationship would benefit both and have signed an agreement to investigate the feasibility of creating a "formal, highly integrated collaborative relationship." Additionally, such an agreement could offer more opportunities for grants and externally funded clinical trials.

### *BEAR LAKE COUNTY*

- The Bear Lake Planning and Zoning Commission has been evaluating several different subdivision plans. The proposed Black Bear Mountain Resort is progressing in stages. County planners, resort developers, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management officials and local residents are working together to ensure the development proceeds with as little disruption as possible to the quality of life enjoyed by those living in the area. Black Bear is currently advertising for employees and has a work force of 20 in Bear Lake County.
- Montpelier's Gem team reviewed goals established during the initial evaluation in September and is formulating strategies to achieve them. The overall objective is to attract jobs to the area that pay a living wage.

### *BINGHAM COUNTY*

- Blackfoot businessmen Les Sorensen, Bryce Lloyd and Shane Gifford opened a UPS store just in time for the busy holiday shipping season. The store is a member of the Pack and Ship Program, which means all items packed and shipped by store employees at the store are guaranteed 100 percent safe. The store is located in downtown Blackfoot, which has made more than \$1 million in renovations in the last five years.
- Nexus Financial Group opened a new office in Blackfoot. Nexus also has other offices in Victor, Idaho Falls and Rexburg. The company offers several financing packages, which are tailored to each customer.
- Ridgeline Energy has withdrawn its application for a special use permit to build up to 150 wind turbines. The company indicated another application would be made once all of the property owners

within 300 feet of the land expected to be leased by Ridgeline were notified of Ridgeline's plans. During the initial permitting process, 17 of the approximately 89 property owners in the area were not properly notified. Ridgeline currently has 13 wind turbines operating in Bingham County.

#### *CARIBOU COUNTY*

- Dr. Jerry Walker has joined Mountain View Dental Clinic. Another full-time dentist will make it easier to schedule appointments and handle emergency patient needs in the community.
- The upgrade to the city of Soda Springs' wastewater treatment plant is about nine months behind schedule but still on budget. A large factor in the delay has been the six-month review of the low interest loan application to the state Department of Environmental Quality, which took nearly a year to be granted. The project is now expected to be completed in May of 2008.

#### *FRANKLIN COUNTY*

- Chiropractor Dallas Ward held a ribbon cutting for his new spinal rehabilitation center in Preston. The new center expands current services.
- Rocky Mountain Power filed an objection to the proposal by Twin Lakes Canal Co. to build a dam on the Bear River. Rocky Mountain argues that the dam would adversely affect its ability to meet current obligations and contracts. The licensing process will continue with hearings before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and it is expected to be several more months before a final decision is made.
- A Duckwell-Alco Store will open in Preston next February. The 20,000-square-foot store will employ 25 and will be the fourth ALCO store in Idaho. ALCO is a regional retailer offering fashionable merchandise at reasonable prices. The distribution center for stores in this area is in Abilene, Kan.
- The City of Preston was awarded a \$200,000 block grant by the Idaho Department of Commerce to extend water lines and pave a road to a new tenant at the industrial park.
- Cache Valley Transit Manager Todd Beutler reported more than 13,000 riders from October 2006 to September 2007. What started as an experiment in reducing auto emissions in the valley has turned into a successful way for many workers commuting to and from Logan, Utah, to save more than \$300 per month they would otherwise be spending on fuel.

#### *ONEIDA COUNTY*

- The Oneida County Airport Advisory Committee appointed by the county commissioners has been given the charge of developing one- and five-year plans for the airport. This is the first time a committee of this type has been formed to evaluate the airport's function, and it will be dealing with a wide variety of issues.
- Bear River Resource Conservation and Development council may apply for a grant to put a weather station in western Oneida County. The county has been without a National Weather Service station for some time and it has been sorely missed by farmers and ranchers applying for weather-related disaster funds, local residents planning recreational activities and U.S. Fish and Game officers trying to conduct sage grouse studies.
- The nationwide housing slump has affected Malad City. Hess Pumice announced the company will be closing production lines at its cultured stone operation, which will idle 34 employees. The layoffs will be permanent unless the housing market and demand for the cultured stone facades increase.
- The Malad Senior Citizen Center received a \$20,000 grant from the Nell Redfield Foundation to help pay for the installation of a new heating system.

#### *POWER COUNTY*

- Construction activity in American Falls is visual evidence of new business activity in the community. A new Duckwall-Alco store is scheduled to open next March if construction can continue through the winter. A NAPA Auto Parts store and Subway restaurant will also be opening in the near future. The Subway has already been conducting interviews and reports a good response to help wanted ads.
- Another commercial construction project in the area, the Bureau of Land Management fire station, should be completed by the end of December. The fire station itself will be 4,800 square feet. The adjoining engine shed will be 2,800 square feet. The BLM center will not be staffed until the start of fire season next spring.

***See page 34 for the southeastern Idaho labor force and nonfarm jobs data table for October 2007.***

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# Southeastern Idaho Data—October 2007

## Pocatello MSA Labor Force & Employment Bannock and Power counties

	Oct 2007*	Sep 2007	Oct 2006	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	45,640	47,120	45,140	-3.1	1.1
Unemployment	1,030	1,020	1,540	1.0	-33.1
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.3	2.2	3.4		
Total Employment	44,610	46,100	43,600	-3.2	2.3
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	44,020	44,840	45,360	-1.8	-3.0
Unemployment	840	740	1,270	13.5	-33.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	1.9	1.7	2.8		
Total Employment	43,180	44,100	44,090	-2.1	-2.1
<b>JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK</b>					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	40,170	40,050	40,170	0.3	0.0
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>					
Natural Resources & Mining	30	30	20	0.0	50.0
Construction	2,060	2,080	2,110	-1.0	-2.4
Manufacturing	4,030	3,930	3,770	2.5	6.9
<i>Food Manufacturing</i>	1,430	1,410	1,320	1.4	8.3
<i>Fabricated Metal Product     Manufacturing</i>	180	180	170	0.0	5.9
<i>Machinery Manufacturing</i>	350	370	240	-5.4	45.8
<i>Other Manufacturing</i>	2,070	1,970	2,040	5.1	1.5
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>					
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	7,430	7,330	7,390	1.4	0.5
<i>Wholesale Trade</i>	1,340	1,360	1,330	-1.5	0.8
<i>Retail Trade</i>	4,630	4,610	4,600	0.4	0.7
<i>Utilities</i>	50	50	50	0.0	0.0
<i>Transportation &amp; Warehousing</i>	1,310	1,310	1,410	0.0	-7.1
Information	680	700	740	-2.9	-8.1
Financial Activities	2,300	2,290	2,150	0.4	7.0
Professional & Business Services	5,610	5,540	5,560	1.3	0.9
Educational & Health Services	3,480	3,440	3,230	1.2	7.7
Leisure & Hospitality	3,460	3,600	3,470	-3.9	-0.3
Other Services	1,130	1,170	1,150	-3.4	-1.7
Government Education	5,920	5,280	6,130	12.1	-3.4
Government Administration	4,140	4,660	4,450	-11.2	-7.0

\*Preliminary Estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month